

Kitchen Risk Assessment

Checklist · UK · Published 2026-09-08 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A kitchen risk assessment is the written record of the significant health and safety hazards in a commercial kitchen — wet and greasy floors, hot oil and surfaces, steam, knives and slicers, deliveries and manual handling, cleaning chemicals, gas and electrical equipment, lone working at open and close, and noise — set against who might be harmed and how, the controls already in place, the further action still needed, and the person and date that own each action.

Kitchens concentrate more hazards into fewer square metres than almost any other workplace, and they run at pace with a young, fast-changing workforce. The HSE says slips and trips remain the single most common cause of major injury in UK workplaces, and names kitchen assistants, chefs and waiting staff among the occupations most affected in catering. The failure mode is rarely ignorance — it is a generic assessment downloaded once, filed somewhere nobody looks, that mentions nothing about your fryer, your delivery route, or the step down into your walk-in.

This template gives you a completed kitchen assessment you can adapt line by line: a real hazard table with controls and actions, the sign-off and review block that makes it a live document, how it sits alongside your food safety management system rather than replacing it, and how to turn each control into a step your team is actually trained on.

Purpose and scope

This assessment records the significant health and safety risks in the kitchen at [Your company], [site/premises name], and the controls in place to manage them. It covers [areas — e.g. the main kitchen, prep area, pot wash, dry store, walk-in chillers and freezers, cellar, delivery entrance and bin area].

It applies to everyone who works in or passes through those areas: chefs and kitchen porters, front-of-house staff collecting from the pass, agency and casual cover, apprentices and under-18s, contractors and engineers, and delivery drivers. Young workers, new starters, new and expectant mothers, and anyone working alone are treated as groups especially at risk and are named where relevant in the table.

It sits alongside, and does not replace, our food safety management system, our fire risk assessment, and our COSHH assessments, each of which is held at [location/system].

Before you fill it in

- Walk the kitchen during a live service, not at 10am on a quiet Tuesday. Half the hazards in a kitchen only exist when six people are moving at once.
- Talk to the people doing the job — the KP knows where the floor goes slick, the commis knows which shelf you cannot reach without climbing.
- Read the accident book and the near-miss log for the last [12 months]. Every entry is a hazard someone has already proved is real.
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Pull the safety data sheets for every cleaning chemical on site and the manuals for the slicer, mixer, fryer and combi — the manufacturer has already listed the hazards for you.

- Note what has changed since the last version: new equipment, a new menu, a layout change, a new supplier delivering at a different door, a change in opening hours.
- Agree before you start who signs it off and who holds the budget for the further actions, so the assessment does not end in a column of wishes.

Assessment details and sign-off

- Site and areas covered: [site name] — [areas].
- Assessment carried out by: [name], [job title]. Competence basis: [e.g. head chef with [n] years in commercial kitchens, holds [qualification], completed [training]].
- People consulted: [names/roles — include at least one person who works the section being assessed].
- Date of assessment: [date]. Next scheduled review: [date].
- Approved by: [name], [job title], with authority to commit spend on the further actions listed.
- Signature: [signature] — Date: [date].
- Communicated to the team on [date] by [method — e.g. team briefing, printed copy on the notice-board, added to the induction pack].

The kitchen risk assessment

This is the document. Every row below is a real commercial-kitchen hazard with example controls and

example further actions — treat them as a starting draft, not as findings about your kitchen. Delete what keeps the language concrete. "Staff to be careful" is not a control; "fryer lids down and no filling above the max line, checked at the close down" is. Every entry in the last two columns needs a named person and site. Blank rows are provided at the end.

[illegible]

Who is competent to sign this off

The law does not require a qualification to carry out a risk assessment — it requires the assessment to be suitable and sufficient, which in practice means the person doing it knows the kitchen, the equipment and the tasks well enough to spot what is actually going on. In most operations that is the head chef or kitchen manager working with the general manager or owner, with input from the people on each section.

Bring in outside help where a specific hazard is beyond your knowledge — noise measurement, a local exhaust ventilation examination, an electrical installation condition report, or a fire risk assessment for a complex building. Buying a generic consultant's document that never mentions your fryer or your delivery door is not the same thing, and inspectors recognise the difference immediately.

Whoever signs it should also be able to authorise the further actions, or the assessment turns into a list of things somebody else was supposed to pay for.

How this sits alongside your food safety management system

Two separate documents, two separate purposes. Your food safety management system — Safer Food, Better Business or an equivalent built on HACCP principles — protects the food: temperature control, cross-contamination, cleaning, chilling, cooking, allergens, and the daily diary that records them. This risk assessment protects the people: how they get burned, cut, injured lifting, or hurt slipping.

They overlap in three places and it is worth being explicit about who owns what. Cleaning chemicals appear in the food safety system as a contamination risk and here as a COSHH and dermatitis risk. Floor cleaning appears there as hygiene and here as the single biggest injury cause in the room. Allergen handling belongs to the food safety system; it appears in the table above only as an interface, so that a manager reading the risk assessment is pointed at the right document rather than following a shortened version of it.

Keep them physically together at [location/system] and review them in the same sitting. In a restaurant, pub, cafe or hotel it is your local authority, not the HSE, that enforces health and safety as well as food hygiene — HSE's inspectors cover workplaces such as factories, farms, building sites, schools and colleges, so a kitchen inside one of those is the exception rather than the rule. Whoever walks in, the follow-up question is the same: can the people on shift right now tell me what this says?

Turning each control into a trained procedure

- Read down the "controls already in place" column and ask, for each one, where a new starter would learn it. If the answer is "they would pick it up", it is not yet a control.
- Map each control to the document that already carries it — opening and closing checks, the cleaning rota, the COSHH assessment, the manual handling procedure — rather than writing a new one.
- Turn the controls that have no home into a short written step in the relevant section procedure: fryer close-down, slicer cleaning, delivery routine, lone-working check-in.
- Name which machines require sign-off before use (slicer, mandolin, mixer, [others]) and hold the list of who is signed off on each with your training records.
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Cover the assessment's findings at induction and again whenever a control changes — regulation 13 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires health and safety training on recruitment and on exposure to new or increased risks, repeated periodically where appropriate.

- Record who was trained on what and when. The assessment and the training records only prove anything when read together.

Reviewing the assessment

- Review whenever there is reason to suspect the assessment is no longer valid, or after any significant change — those are the triggers regulation 3(3) actually sets, not a date in the diary.
- Specific triggers in a kitchen: new or replaced equipment; a menu change that adds a new process; a layout or extraction change; a new cleaning chemical or supplier; a change in delivery times or door; a move to later trading hours or lone closing.
- Always review after a reportable accident, a significant near miss, or an enforcement visit — and record what changed as a result, even if the answer is nothing.
- Set an annual backstop review at [month] so a quiet year does not mean an assessment that quietly ages out.
- Date every version and keep the superseded ones. A dated trail showing hazards being found and closed out is worth more at an investigation than a single pristine document.

Records and where this is kept

- Master copy: [system/location], owned by [name/role].
- Working copy: printed and displayed at [location — e.g. inside the kitchen office door], so the team can read it without asking anyone.
- Retention: keep superseded versions for at least [period], and keep any version referred to in an accident investigation for as long as the investigation and any claim remain live.
- Linked records: COSHH assessments, safety data sheets, training records, equipment service and test records, the accident book, and the food safety management system diary — all at [location/system].
- Included in the induction pack for every new starter and every agency worker, with a signature to confirm they have read the sections that apply to their job.

How to use this template

1. Walk the kitchen during a live service with the people who work in it before you change a single line of this template.
2. Delete every row that is not true of your kitchen, rewrite the controls to describe what you genuinely do, and add the hazards specific to your equipment, layout and delivery arrangements.
3. Replace every [bracketed placeholder] with a real name and a real date — "ongoing" is not a date and "the team" is not an owner.
- 4.

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Have it signed off by someone who knows the kitchen and can authorise spend on the further actions, and record who you consulted.

5. Record the significant findings and any group especially at risk if you employ five or more people, print a working copy where the team can read it, and diary the review.
6. Turn each control into a trained step in the procedure that owns it, and log who has been trained on what.

Official guidance

- › [HSE — Steps needed to manage risk](#)
- › [HSE — Risk assessment template and examples](#)
- › [HSE — Catering and hospitality](#)
- › [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, regulation 3](#)

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